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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Carson Says Nursing Home Report Shows Families Are Being Left
"In The Dark"
Joins The Call For HHS To Fix The Flaws***

Washington, D.C. --

Today, the Committee on Government Reform led by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) released a report outlining the flaws in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) "Nursing Home Compare" website which shows that thousands of violations are not being made easily accessible to consumers.

"Information is power in this fight for better care for our loved ones," said Congressman Carson. "Families need to be armed with the most comprehensive, up-to-date information about every type of violation or infraction against a nursing home before they select one to care for their loved one."

The HHS website only includes violations cited during annual inspections of nursing homes and does not include any violations cited during complaint investigations. The report reveals nationally that there were over 25,000 violations cited during complaint investigations that were not cited on the "Nursing Home Compare" website. These violations include 1,100 violations that caused death or serious injury (immediate jeopardy) and 4,400 violations that caused actual harm. Put another way, 59% of all immediate jeopardy violations and 41% of all actual harm violations are not listed on "Nursing Home Compare" website.

"Last June I met with the new director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the one thing he repeated over and over again is that 'collecting data and publishing it changes behavior faster than anything else' and he is exactly correct," said Congressman Carson. "Some of these violations would take an average citizen years to wade through the paperwork and bureaucracy to find them. HHS should make it a priority to include every violation found either in annual inspections or through the complaint process on their website."

The exclusion of complaint violations from "Nursing Home Compare" has a significant impact on Oklahoma residents searching for information on nursing homes.

There are 874 violations affecting 131 Oklahoma nursing homes that are excluded from "Nursing Home Compare." Between October 1, 2000, and December 31, 2001, nursing homes in Oklahoma were cited for 283 immediate jeopardy and actual harm violations. "Nursing Home Compare," however, contains data on only 176 of these violations. Almost 40% of the immediate jeopardy and actual harm violations -- 107 violations -- were discovered during complaint investigations. They are not disclosed to the public on "Nursing Home Compare."

"We can see that families in Oklahoma when searching for the best nursing home available were in the dark on over 800 violations that should have been made more accessible," said Congressman Carson. "I am very hopeful that HHS will wake up after these findings and make the changes necessary to provide all useful information on their website."

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